Using Social Marketing Principles to Reach Consumers: "Selling" Food Thermometer Use

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Mission:

- ***To increase the use of food thermometers by parents of children under age 10 to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness***

Social Marketing is…

- **The application of marketing principles to social initiatives to achieve public health goals through behavior change.**

Key Concepts

- **Uses commercial marketing technologies and theory**
  - **The 4 P's**
  - **Exchange Theory**
- **Influences, rather than using coercive strategies**
- **Brings about voluntary behavior change**

Key Concepts

- **Targets specific audiences**
- **Consumer Orientation: Data driven decision making**
  - **segment audience**
  - **set behavioral objectives**
  - **identify determinants to address**

The Marketing Mind-Set

- **Understand and respond to consumer wants and needs**
- **Formative research based on marketing model**
  - **who do I want to help?**
  - **What am I recommending they do?**
  - **What factors must I address**

The 4 P's

- **Product**
- **Price**
- **Place**
- **Promotion**

Make it Fun, Easy, Popular

Exchange Theory

Make an attractive offer:

IF I DO (this new action)
INSTEAD OF (this old behavior),
I WILL (get this benefit)
BECAUSE (reason).

Phases in Thermometer Campaign Development

- **Phase 1:** Campaign for the General Public
- **Phase 2:** Targeted Audience Segmentation
- **Phase 3:** Planning and Implementation of Targeted Campaign

Phase 1: General Public Awareness

- **Long history of encouraging food thermometer use**
- **Outbreaks changed the awareness -- 1993 *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak**
- **Science changed the message**

Past Messages

Safe Handling Instructions

This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.

Keep refrigerated or frozen.
Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.

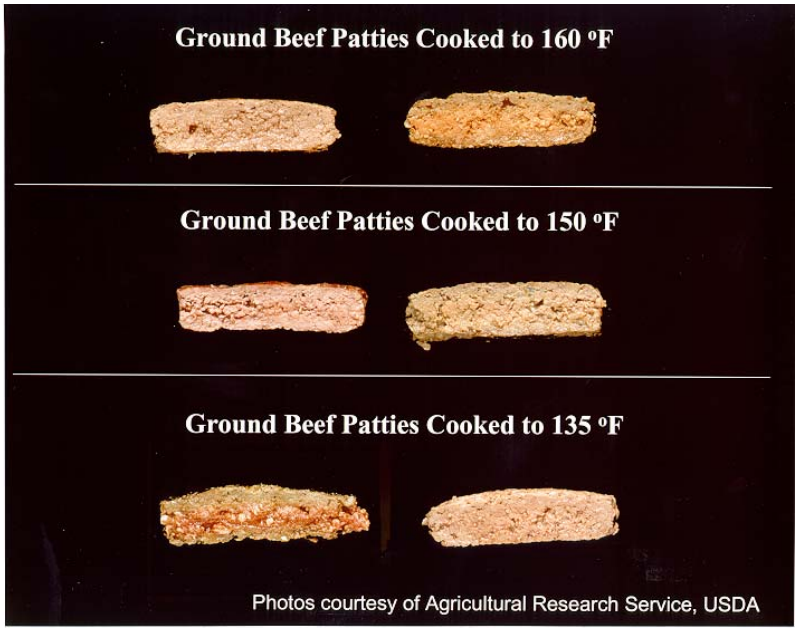
Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.

Cook thoroughly.

Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

Cooking Studies Show Color Not a Reliable Indicator of Safety

- **Cooking by color is misleading**
- **1 out of 4 hamburgers turns brown before it reaches safe temperature**



Using a food thermometer is the only reliable way to determine if food is safety cooked

But, it is a "Tough Sell"

- **In 1994 Hotline survey, less than 50% owned a food thermometer**
- **Most used it only for the Thanksgiving turkey, if at all**
- **Very few used it for all meats**

1998 National Survey

- **Less than 50% of American cooks owned a food thermometer**
- **Only 3% use it to check small items like hamburgers**

Listening to the Customer: Focus Groups Conducted

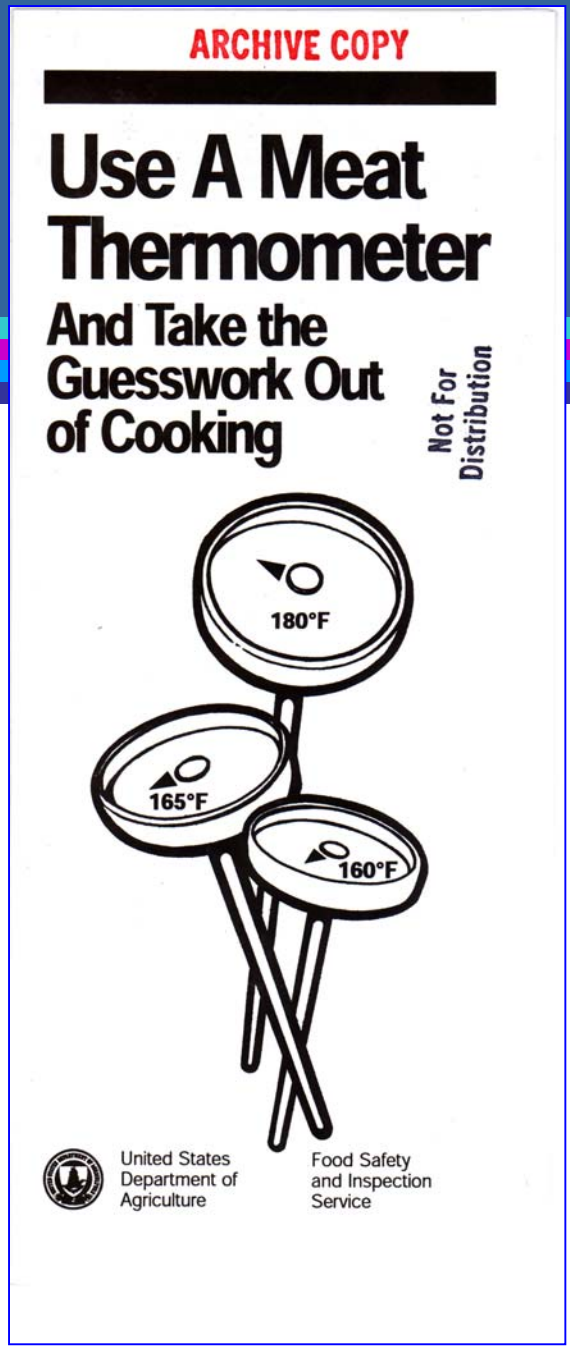
- Consumer's food safety knowledge quite good
- Used color of meat and "intuition" to test doneness
- Knowledge and use of thermometers limited
- Less than enthusiastic about using a thermometer

Some Barriers Existed…

Consumer Attitudes about Food Thermometer Use

- **Inconvenience -- "It's a hassle"**
- **Added expense to purchase a thermometer**
- **Experience -- feel not necessary -- they know when food is done**
- **Cooking for years without ill effects**

They didn't think they were guessing…



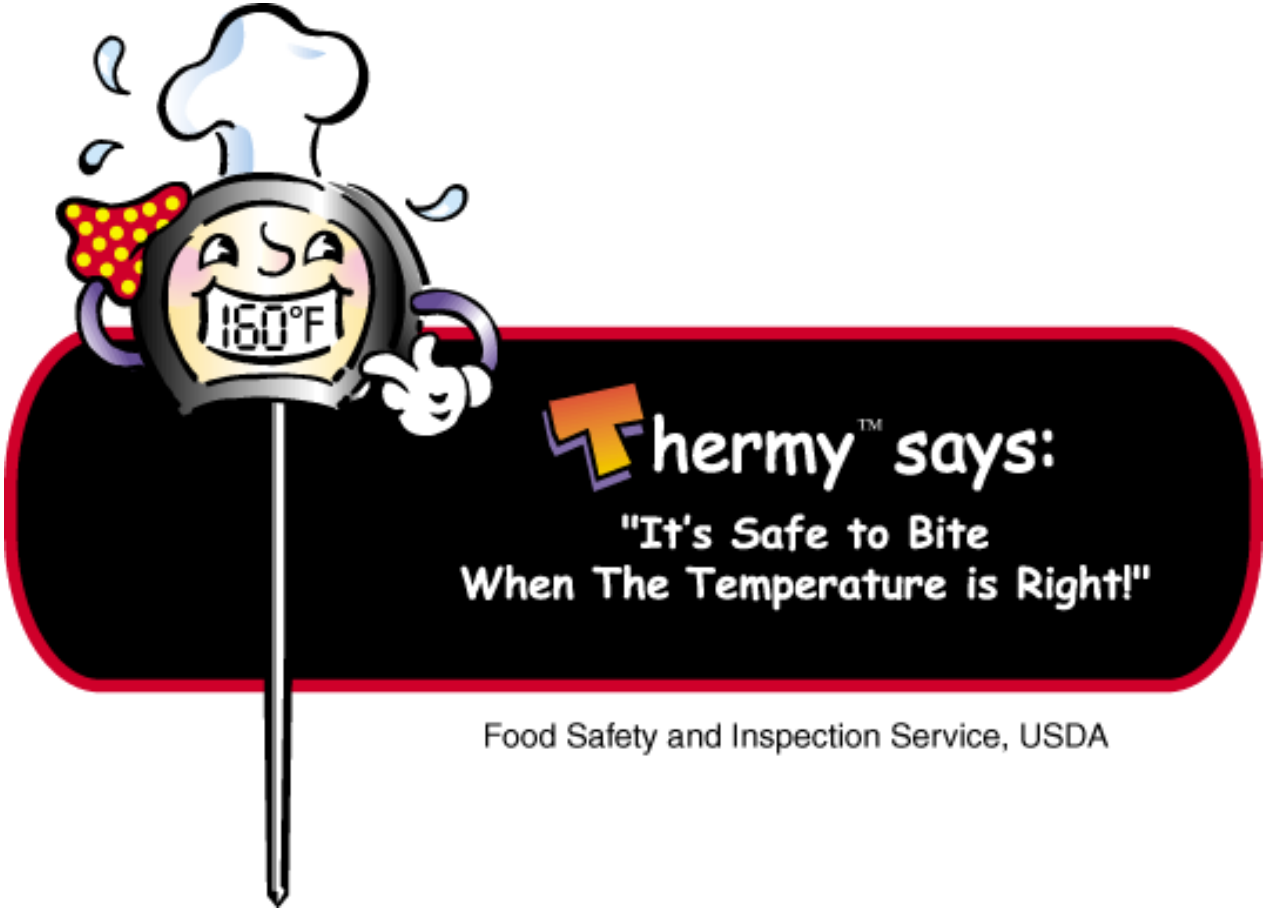
Key Findings...
Behavior Change is Possible

- **Parents of young children are most likely to change behavior - *but for their children only***
- **Upscale cooks interested in quality foods might consider use to avoid overcooking**

Data Used to Develop a National Campaign

- **1998 Data told us:**
  - **Target parents of young children**
  - **Emphasize taste**
  - **Easy to use everyday**
- **1999 Campaign focus groups:**
  - **Stress safety**
  - **Created "Thermy™" character**

National Campaign Launched



Campaign Successes

- **2001 National Survey Shows:**
  - **60% own a food thermometer**
    - **Up from 46% in '98**
  - **6% use a thermometer when cooking hamburgers**
    - **Up from 3% in '98**
- **Thermometer sales**
  - **Industry sales data show an increase in sales of thermometers**

2001 Focus Groups

- Conducted groups with parents of children under 10
- Divided groups based on education level
- Utilized New Methods
  - Provided all of the participants with materials and half with food thermometers prior to the group

Focus Group Results

- **Parents confident in ability to safely handle food at home**
- **Most not aware of importance of using a food thermometer**
- **Participants who received a food thermometer with educational materials more likely to use one**

Phase 2: Audience Segmentation

- **Began work in 2001 to further segment audience -- parents of young children**
  - **Parents are potential early adopters of this behavior**
    - **"low hanging fruit"**
  - **Children are at increased risk of foodborne illness**

Goals Based on Stages of Behavior Change:

- **Among parents of children under 10:**
  - **increase *awareness* of the need to use a food thermometer**
  - **increase *intention* to use food thermometers**
  - **increase *sales* of food thermometers**

Goals Based on Stages of Behavior Change:

- **Increase *trial usage* of food thermometers**
- **increase *continued regular usage* of food thermometers**
- **Decrease the *incidence* of foodborne illness among young children**

Immediate Focus on First Goal

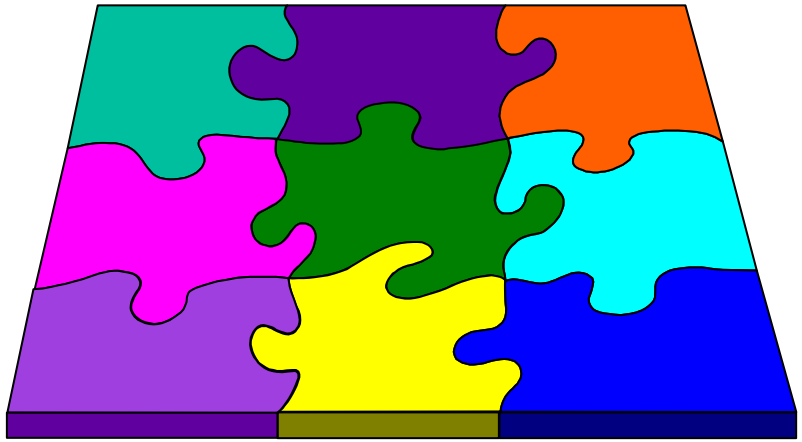
- **Increase awareness of the need for using food thermometers among parents of children under 10:**
  - **by 15% by 2004**
  - **by 60% by 2010***

***Objective coincides with Federal *Healthy People 2010* Campaign**

Forms of Segmentation

- Demographic
- Geographic
- Psychographic
- Behavioral
- Geodemographic
- Household

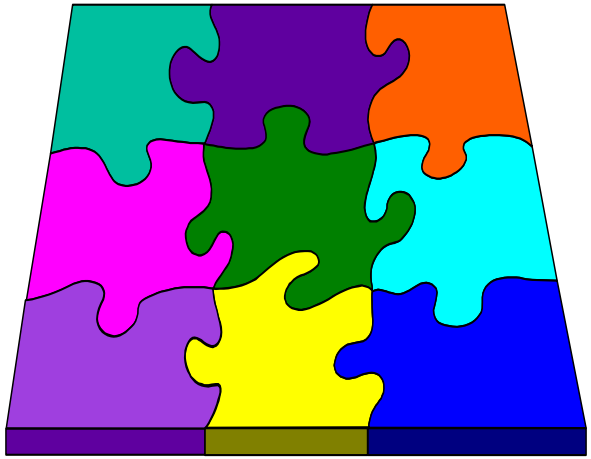
Focus Groups -- Phase 1



Segment the Market

- Geodemographics
- Stages of behavior change
- Perceptions & attitudes

- WHY?
- Improves efficiency
- Improves effectiveness



Using Commercial Models

- **Incorporate the power of advanced modeling**
  - **technology tested and enhanced for nearly 30 years**
  - **use of "birds of a feather" to find patterns**
  - **use of a household-by-household insight**

Narrowing the Focus

from *all people all the time*...

...to *62 distinct neighborhood types*...

...to 28 neighborhood types with concentrations of children under age 10

Defining Sub-segments

28 neighborhood types into 4 distinct groups:

- **demographics (educational attainment)**
- **lifestyles (purchase behaviors, leisure activities)**
- **psychographics (willingness to change)**

Boomburbs	Rural Towns
Heartlands	Single Moms

Thermy™
"IT'S SAFE TO BITE WHEN THE TEMPERATURE IS RIGHT!"
—Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
FSIS

FSIS
FTEC Segment Formation
Preliminary Segment Comparisons
"BOOMBURBS"
"SINGLE MOMS"
"HEARTLANDS"
"RURAL TOWNS"
© 2001 The Baldwin Group, Inc.

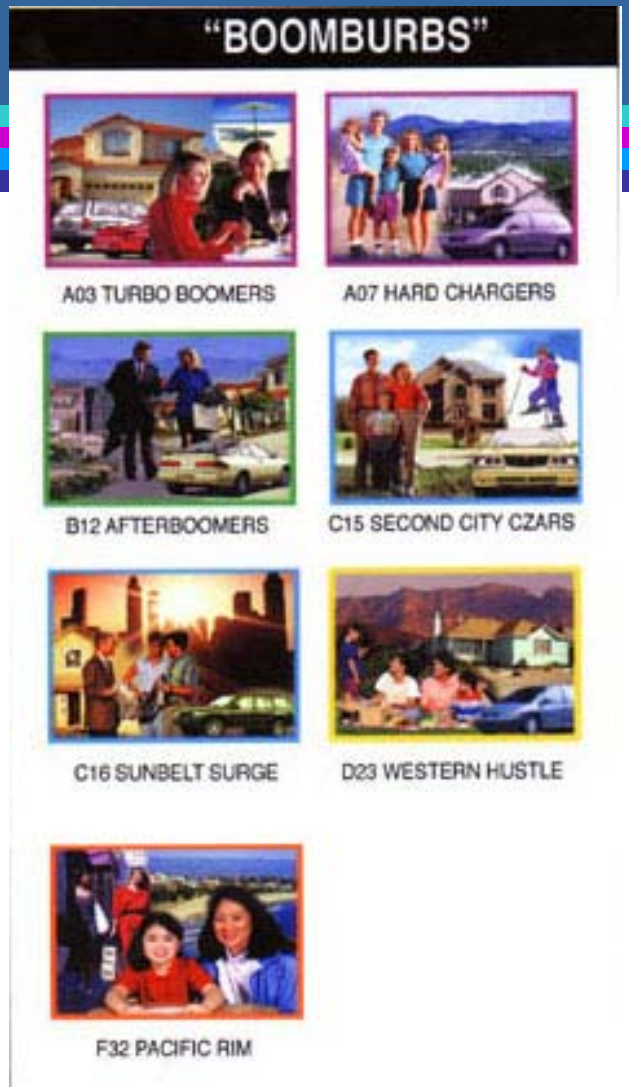
Prioritizing Sub-Segments

Use of an Allocations Matrix:

- **Number of children under age ten**
- **Exposure to undercooked meat products**
- **The quickness of new information motivating behavior changes**

Primary Target Selection

- ***Boomburbs*** **scored highest**
- **Implications of focusing on this target explored with the I-Wheel™ planning tool**



Boomburbs: Trendsetter Population

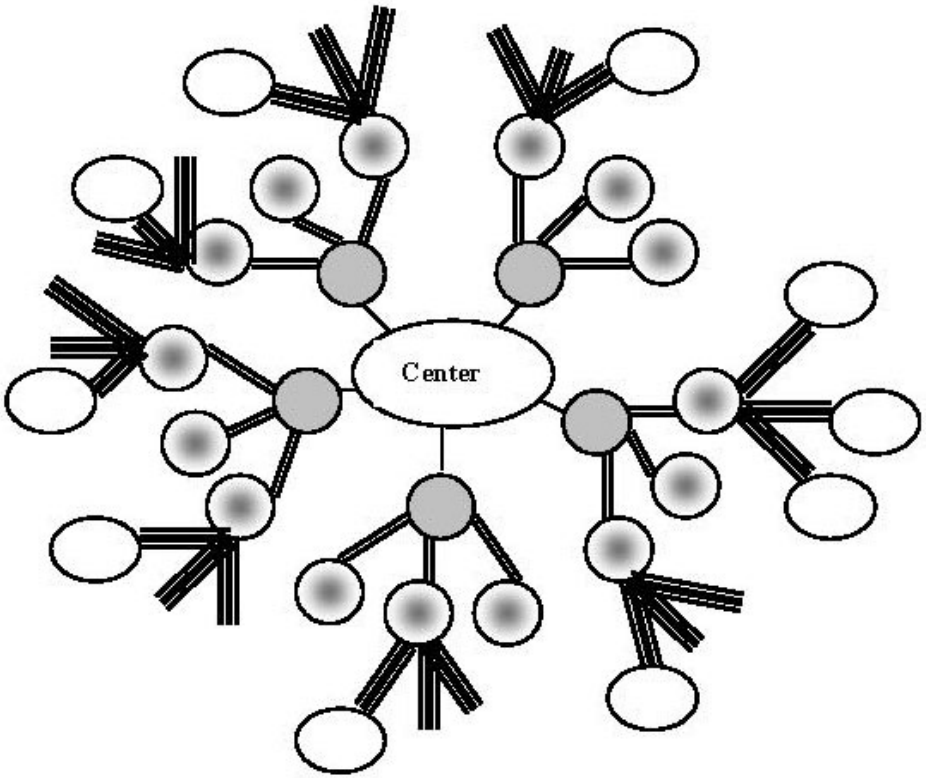
- News and information hungry
- Technology-savvy gadget lovers
- Demand high achievement for their children
- Gourmet-conscious “foodies”
- Safety conscious

Boomburbs: Trendsetter Population

- **Seeks luxury**
- **Above average consumers of scientific and technological entertainment**
- **Influencers in society -- doctors, educators, communicators, political leaders**

Implications Wheel: Barriers and Bridges Identified

Figure 4. Implications Wheel™



Barriers & Bridges

- **Barriers:**
  - **May reach a "safety overload"**
  - **Some who are at risk are not informed**
  - **Message may get lost in information overload**
- **Bridges:**
  - **Share ideas with friends and family**
  - **Tend to seek more information about new things**

Target Exploration: Become Relevant to their World

- Media preferences (print, radio, TV)
- Shopping habits (groceries, home products)
- Financial behaviors (credit and debt tools)
- Attitudes and beliefs (personal ideals)
- Lifestyles (recreation, travel)
- Automobiles

Boomburbs Preferences

- **Magazines --**
  - **PC Magazine, Martha Stewart Living, Money, Bon Appetit**
- **Radio --**
  - **Soft Contemporary, Classic rock, News/Talk, Drive-time, NPR**
- **TV --**
  - **Comedy Central, E!, Headline News, The Disney Channel**

Boomburbs Preferences

- **Stores --**
  - **Target, Pier 1 Imports, Gap for Kids, Toys R Us, Macy's, Disney**
- **Household Products --**
  - **Burglar alarm, bread machine, electric coffee grinder, Camcorder,**
- **Food and Drink --**
  - **Brie cheese, Godiva, lunch kits, toaster pastries**

Wide Variety of Information Available…

- **Financial Behaviors**
- **Attitudes and Beliefs**
- **Lifestyles**
- **Automobiles**

Where They Live

- Phoenix
- Sacramento
- Orlando
- Atlanta
- Wilmington, DE
- Topeka
- Albuquerque
- Greensboro
- Annapolis
- Tampa
- Minneapolis
- Houston

Parts of most major cities

Desired Behaviors - What We Want Them To Do:

- **Become willing to collect information**
- **Accept that it might apply to them**
- **Experiment with methods and tools**
- **Acquire food thermometers, learn to use**
- **Repeat the behavior every time**
- **Teach their children and others**

Possible Benefits to Emphasize

- **Better tasting meat**
- **Insuring a perfect quality result every time**
- **Satisfaction from predictability**
- **Increased confidence in the cooking process**

Possible Benefits to Emphasize

- **Enjoyment of using a new technology**
- **Satisfaction from pursuing healthier cooking that is safer for their children**

Strategies for Education

- News media stories
- Internet
- Cooking-related TV programs
- Television/film references
- Upscale grocers
- Upscale gadget retailers/catalogs
- Adult education, eg, cooking classes
- Parent-Teacher Organizations

Phase 3: Reaching Boomburbs

- **Conducted Boomburbs observational research focus groups**

Observational Focus Groups Findings

- **Little knowledge of thermometer use**
- **Viewed them as inconvenient to use**
- **Used visual cues to decide if food is done**

Focus Groups Barriers

- **Family tradition -- thermometers not used by role models**
- **Don’t know how to use food thermometers**
- **Don’t think it necessary to use them on small cuts of meat**

Bridges to Use

- **Parents concern for children's safety**
- **Boomburbs interest in food quality and using technology**

Other Findings

- **Don't know visual signs are not reliable**
- **Web use high -- as predicted**
- **Get information from the media**

The 4 "P"s for Boomburbs

- **Product:** Use a food thermometer for everyday meals
- **Price:** Hassle factor and actual cost to purchase a thermometer
  - Exchange hassle for safety of children

The 4 "P"s for Boomburbs

- **Place:** Place in life -- Parents of children under 10
- **Place:** Actual place -- grocery stores, kitchenware shops
- **Promotion:** Messages and mechanisms we will use to reach them

Phase 3: Plans for Targeted Campaign

- **Develop revised support materials for Boomburbs**
- **Develop PR plans and educational plans for Boomburbs**
- **Conduct pilot campaign in a specific city to test materials**

Testing Campaign Approaches in Tampa

Conceptual testing to find viable messages

Plans for Targeted Campaign, continued

- **Work with applicable media to inform Boomburbs about safety issues**
- **Explore Web site changes specific to Boomburbs**
- **Possibly redesign the Thermy™ character to be more technical or eliminate for Boomburbs**

Plans for Targeted Campaign

- **Continue collaboration with thermometer manufacturers to design appealing products**
  - **November 13th Meeting**
- **Collaborate with industry to produce learning environments at grocers, colleges, etc.**

Plans for Targeted Campaign

- **Design a plan to reach the Boomburbs children and parents in their school environments**
- **Develop and install a formal tracking & evaluation process; revise objectives**
- **Targeted Market Surveys**

Holly on the Today Show

November 10, 2002

Thermy™
"IT'S SAFE TO BITE
WHEN THE TEMPERATURE IS RIGHT!"
—Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
160°F

160°F

Stay tuned…